

man to beget children. Often they were persons who entered the society after having fulfilled this duty.¹ They had extreme rules of Sabbath keeping, food taboo, purification, and extreme doctrines of renunciation of luxury and pleasure. They either died out or coalesced with Christians.²

684. Roman asceticism. The primitive Roman mores were

very austere, not ascetic, and the institutions of the family and

sex were strictly controlled by the mores. The Vestal Virgins

might be cited as a proof that virginity was considered a quali-

fication for high religious functions, so that it seemed meritorious

and pure and a nobler estate than marriage.

685. Christian asceticism. Christianity is ascetic in its atti-

tude towards wealth, luxury, and pleasure. It inherited from

Judaism hostility to sensuality, which was thought by the Jews

to be a mark of heathenism and an especial concomitant of

idolatry. We distinguish between luxury and pleasure on the

one side and sensuality on the other, and repress the last for

rational, not ascetic, reasons.

686. Three traditions united in Christianity. The three

streams of tradition which entered into Christianity brought

down ascetic notions and temper. The antagonism of flesh

and spirit is expressed, Galat. v. 16, and the evil of the flesh,

Romans vii. 18, 25 ; Eph. v. 29. Yet ascetics are denounced,

I Tim. iv. 3, " forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain

from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiv-

ing by them that believe and know the truth."

In I Tim. iii. 2

and Titus i. 6 it is expressly stated that a priest or bishop is

to be the husband of one wife. In Revelation

xiv. 4 a group

are described as " they who were not defiled with women, for

they are virgins." The notion that procreation is " impure " and that renunciation of it is " purity " is present here. Cf. Levit. xv. 16— 18. In i Cor. vii the doctrine is that renunciation of marriage is best; that marriage is a concession to human frailty; that all sex relation outside of marriage is sin. If there is a

¹*Jewish Encyc.*, V, s. v. " Essenes."

²Cook, *Fathers of Jesus*, II, 48; Lucius, *Essenismus* ^ 131 ; Graetz, *Gesch. der Juden*, III, 92 ff.